

# EDC Minutes – 12 February 2015

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These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. This meeting took place on 12 February 2015 in Room 121 of the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:39 pm by Derrick Chin, who was chairing the meeting at the request of Nancy Dinkel.

Present: Allan Gulliver, Ann Chang, Bharat Shah, David Foley, Derrick Chin, Franny Osman, Larry Kenah

Not Present: Dick Calandrella, Doug Tindal, Nancy Dinkel

## Mission, Goals, and Objectives (1)

This was a special meeting of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) with a single agenda item, continued progress on goals and objectives for the EDC.

- Most of the meeting was spent discussing the results from the team focusing on the second goal.

*Facilitate the relationships between businesses and town government*

- The remainder of the meeting was spent on a refinement pass on the reports from the other two teams.

## Goal 2 Action Items

This iteration of the report focused on action items that supported the second goal. David Foley indicated that he and his team would make another pass to consolidate similar action items into three or four objectives.

### Action Items

Here are some common themes in the report.

- Catalog Information
  - Support for new businesses provided by the Town of Acton
  - Active businesses
  - Zoning districts in Acton that allow businesses
    - Ann Chang noted that this information already exists. The role of the EDC might be to make the information more accessible to people who are not zoning experts.
- Connect businesses with groups in Acton and elsewhere that can help businesses to get started
  - Town departments
  - Organizations at the state and Federal level

- Financial support
- Marketing
  - These action items indicated overlap with the third goal being addressed by Allan Gulliver and his team (Franny and Bharat)

We realized after completing the list of action items that there was some overlap with the third goal and less overlap with the first goal (support existing businesses). David Foley and Allan Gulliver will work together to eliminate the overlaps that most clearly belong to this or that goal.

We noted that some action items clearly support multiple goals and we will leave them in multiple places.

### Discussion Points

Here are some key points that emerged from the discussion.

- The work that is being done to the left hand side of the ground floor of Town Hall is addressing some of the structural impediments to making it easier for businesses (both existing and new) to work with town departments. We need to ensure that the structural changes are accompanied by changes (simplifications) to the business processes.
- Several proposed action items raised the question about what role(s) the town should play in economic development.
  - Some actions should be promoted by external groups such as the Chamber of Commerce.
  - We (both the EDC and the town) must recognize that certain ideas should be left to the market itself for development.
- We should have a more focused conversation about the merits and disadvantages associated with mixed-use residential and commercial.
- We need to include a focus on transportation in some of these action items.
  - Transportation is included as part of infrastructure in the report from the team addressing existing businesses.

### Tax Breaks for Businesses?

We talked about tax breaks for potential businesses. We realized that this was a contentious issue that needed further focused attention. In an attempt to complete our review of this report, we agreed to include this topic as an explicit agenda item for a future EDC meeting.

We also realized that the committee needs to understand the subtleties associated with town taxes as they apply to businesses.

### Other Teams

Several committee members offered improvements for Allan Gulliver and Larry Kenah to include in the next revision of their reports.

## **In Closing**

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah, EDC Clerk